

# St John's

## Prayers:

Give to your Church, courage to commit itself afresh to You each day. May we trust you through good times and bad for your power and love to be with us each step of the way, until our journey ends. Amen.

We pray for those who need your love and power in their lives today: Merciditas Alvira, Ruth Gillespie, Bala Kompalli, Marion Mason and Chris Tatton-Brown.

We commend to God, all who have died recently, including those in armed conflict, natural disasters and those known to us, especially Maurice Fitchet, Anita Lindo and Farah Lungay. May they rest in peace and rise with Christ in Glory.

## Contacts

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The Parish Office is closed.

**Matthew and Jonny are continuing to say Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer at home. Join them [here](#).**

# St John's Church

## Pew Sheet

### 12th September 2021

#### Services this week:

**9.30am Sunday - Parish Communion  
(with Café St Jean in Church House)  
10.30am Wednesday - Holy Communion**

**The online service for 9.30am on Sunday will be available [here](#).**

**The church will be open for private prayer:  
Sundays - Wednesdays (10.30am-4.30pm).**

**Jesus said,  
"If any want to become my followers  
let them deny themselves  
and take up their cross and follow me"  
Mark 8.34**

#### **ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST - MISSION STATEMENT**

Drawn together by Christ's love, we seek by his grace to live out his commandments to love the Lord our God with all of our being; and to love everyone we come across as we love ourselves.

**[www.stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk](http://www.stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk)**

Please do check our website for future updates

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## The Fifteenth Sunday After Trinity

### **Collect:**

Lord God, defend your Church from all false teaching and give to your people knowledge of your truth, that we may enjoy eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Readings:**

[Isaiah 50:40-9a](#)   [James 3:1-12](#)   [Mark 8:27-38](#)

### **Short Sermon from Licensed Lay Minister, Jean Orpwood:**

Our reading from Mark's Gospel signifies a turning point in Jesus' life and ministry. He is with His disciples in the north, at Caesarea Philippi, once a place of recreation for Roman soldiers. Today, it is a beautiful National Park that includes the headwaters of the Jordan river. It was time to talk seriously. Opening the conversation, Jesus asks the disciples what others are saying about Him. "Who do people say that I am?" He then extends the question to the disciples. "Who do you say that I am?" Peter answers for everyone, "You are the Messiah". We might think that Peter had "got it". Jesus was the longed-for Messiah, but not as the majority of his countrymen thought. They expected deliverance from the hated Roman occupation and a restoration of traditions from the past, brought to them through Moses.

Jesus has their attention, and while He tells them not to reveal this to others just yet, He tells them something of the true meaning of His presence among them: Suffering, Rejection, even by the so-called religious leaders; Death, that would end in Resurrection. I don't suppose many of us could swallow such news that readily, as Peter tries to argue with Jesus, but their minds were focussed on human things, not the divine. They had still much to learn, as do we all, as we may have felt the nudge to reflect upon who Jesus is for us too. At different times and ways we may be certain about our faith and in whom we believe. At others, especially when we feel challenged, or life goes "pear-shaped," it is different and we challenge God, as in the poem "Footprints", when the writer experienced tough times and complained to God that she thought He had left her.

Jesus now tells them all that those who wish to be His followers must "deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me". Being a Christian then, as it is now, is about handing over our personal desires, indeed all of our lives, to be guided and led by God. For some it may

indeed end in the same suffering, rejection and even death. Nearly all the disciples were martyred for their faith, and since then the Church has recognised thousands of others, who stood firm in the face of persecution. During the Reformation, some practised their worship in secret for fear of being found; much later, others were denied public office because of their chosen denomination. Within our own lifetime, we know of Oscar Romero, Janani Luwum, and others, prominent Christian leaders who stood up to corrupt governments. But there are thousands of others across the world, unknown to us by name but known about through the media. The Christian Church today in some parts of the world is very much a minority, but they continue faithfully to worship God and commit themselves to carrying their cross at whatever the cost to their lives. By losing one's life for "my sake and that of the Gospel", said Jesus, "you will save your life". This is the level of commitment to which we are called each day of our lives. We may not have to experience some of the indignities as others have done, but we are to be faithful in that to which we have.

The questions for us today are, to what extent do I want to be a part of all this? For those listening to Jesus that day, they had had no prior example to follow. But for us, Jesus enables us to live our lives within His Love because of what He has been through for us. and by the Power of the Holy Spirit living today in our hearts and lives. St Paul wrote these words, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him .... ". We can be assured that despite all that we may have been through in the past year or so, Jesus has been there for us. He is the same today, yesterday and forever. He is our faithful unchangeable friend. As the Footprints poem ends, "The times when you see only one set of footprints my child, is when I carried you".

In November, we shall welcome Bishop Packer to confirm those who wish to make their commitment to follow Jesus Christ in a public way within the family of the Church. It is a step many of us have taken in years gone by. Perhaps this is something that you may not previously have considered but would like to know more. Have a word with Matthew or Jonny. For now, let us start praying for those who will be confirmed that day and recommit ourselves to following Christ more deeply than before; to offer ourselves in His service and to be put to whatever He may call us, wherever that may be. AMEN.